

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

44 **WHEREAS**, the GPSA passed 2011-2012 Resolution 5 in Fall 2011 to express its
45 dissatisfaction that “From 1971 until 1984, the Cornell Board of Trustees had five student-
46 elected members“ and “In 1984, the Board was contracted from 62 to 42 members, reducing
47 the number of student-elected members from the Ithaca campus to two,” and to call on the
48 Board to work collaboratively with the GPSA on addressing these issues of graduate student
49 representation;

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51 **WHEREAS**, the GPSA passed 2014-2015 Resolution 7 in Spring 2015, stating, “the
52 Graduate and Professional Student Assembly is opposed to decision making by the Cornell
53 University administration that precludes substantive discussion with the larger body of
54 graduate and professional students, as we believe it violates the principles of shared
55 governance within the University” and “the GPSA recommends that the University consider
56 a policy of public notice and an open public comment period whenever a policy is being
57 considered that would change student support, benefits, tuition rates, or any other changes
58 to academic policy that would constitute a substantive departure from current policy”;

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60 **WHEREAS**, the GPSA also passed 2014-2015 Resolution 8 in Spring 2015, stating, “the
61 University should involve communities more broadly in decisions that affect them before
62 making unilateral decisions”;

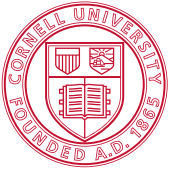
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64 **WHEREAS**, Article XIII, Section 2, of the Bylaws of Cornell University states: “The
65 functions of the University Faculty shall be to consider questions of educational policy
66 which concern more than one college, school or separate academic unit, or are general in
67 nature; and to recommend to the Board of Trustees, with the approval of the appropriate
68 college or school faculty, the establishment, modification or discontinuance of degrees”;

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70 **WHEREAS**, the agglomeration of three existing schools into a single new college
71 constitutes a “question[-] of educational policy which concern[s] more than one college,
72 school or separate academic unit”;

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74 **WHEREAS**, the Faculty Senate Committee to Review Faculty Governance’s “Final Report
75 and Recommendations” of March 7, 2007, outlined multiple instances in which the Faculty
76 Senate had not been consulted for important academic decisions made by the Board of
77 Trustees and administration;

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79 **WHEREAS**, the Board, President Garrett, and Provost Kotlikoff did not seek input from
80 the University Faculty concerning the creation of the College of Business;

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82 **WHEREAS**, the Board, advised by President Garrett and Provost Kotlikoff, voted for the
83 creation of the Cornell College of Business and thereby ignored: 1., University Assembly
84 Resolution 5, approved 9-0-2, to “table the motion to create a College of Business until their
85 March 24th, 2016 meeting” (lines 43-44) and “to solicit further community feedback and
86 engage shared governance with all University constituencies on the proposal” (lines 46-47);
87 2., the Student Assembly’s recommendation, approved 20-0-3 after an open forum at their



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88 meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2016, to “table the proposal for the College of Business to
89 allow more time for community feedback”; and 3., the unanimously passed resolution by
90 The University Faculty that “the University Trustees table consideration of the creation of
91 the College of Business until the Faculty Senate can deliberate on the proposal”;

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93 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the following statement expresses the Sense of
94 the Body:

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96 We formally express our severe disapproval of the Board of Trustees’
97 unanimous decision to approve the creation of the College of Business. In the failure
98 to consult any of the university’s shared governance bodies, and in the tacit rejection
99 of three assemblies’ requests for more time to examine the proposal, the Board’s
100 decision was unapologetically undemocratic. While the GPSA expresses neither
101 support nor disagreement with the content of the decision, we condemn the anti-
102 democratic process of making the decision as well as the ad hoc explanations for the
103 decision, which frame it as inclusive and open after the fact. President Garrett’s
104 indication that the Board’s decision was “the beginning of an inclusive and crucial
105 process” demonstrates flagrant disregard for how “inclusive” decision-making works,
106 or what counts as an appropriate “beginning,” as provided by the university’s own
107 governing documents. This decision has both serious academic and non-academic
108 implications for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and employees;
109 therefore, the Board should have consulted all assemblies to seriously consider input
110 from their constituents early in the planning process. To the extent that the power
111 granted to the GPSA and SA is derived solely from the respective assemblies’
112 charters, and that neither the University Bylaws nor the University Charter mentions
113 the student assemblies, we are ultimately dissatisfied that the President and the
114 Board of Trustees have few structural incentives to take seriously advisory policy
115 resolutions passed in the shared governance system.

116
117 **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**
118 **Alex Brown,**
119 *GPSA Field Representative, German Studies*